

## Informal Transcript

CO.NX webchat with General Consul Patrick Walsh  
December 9, 2009

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): Welcome to CO.NX's webchat with Embassy Kuwait's General Consul. The webchat will begin December 9, 2009 at 3:00pm in Kuwait/ 7:00Am EST. In the meantime, feel free to submit your questions below by typing in the ''Question'' tab and pressing the arrow button.

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): For new guests: feel free to introduce yourself to everyone!

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): Welcome Jennifer! Feel free to submit questions to the General Consul below

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): Welcome to the webchat Rola.

Kuwait: Hello and thank you for the opportunity! My question is actually about getting the green card. My wife is an American Citizen and I want to ask you about the procedures for me to get the green card in order to become an American citizen. Can I start doing that from Kuwait? Thanks!

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Dear Kuwait, thanks very much for your question. In order to obtain a green card, which gives you the status of legal permanent resident in the United States, you will need to enter the United States with an immigrant visa. The first step in getting an immigrant visa is for your wife to file a visa petition. That can be done at the US Embassy in Kuwait. Please see our website for more details. Please note: as a green card holder, it is assumed that you are living and working in the United States. If you simply want to visit the United States for short periods, another type of visa may be more appropriate.

Sameer: how I can change my picture on passport?

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Hi, Sameer, welcome to the webchat and thanks for the question. You cannot change the picture on an already-issued passport. Please do not try to do this. You will need to apply for a new passport and provide a new picture. If you visit our website, you can make an appointment to apply for a new passport. It takes about 10-14 days. Hope this is helpful.

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): For some additional info about visas, please visit Embassy Kuwait's Frequently Asked Questions page:

[http://kuwait.usembassy.gov/frequently\\_asked\\_questions2.html](http://kuwait.usembassy.gov/frequently_asked_questions2.html)

CO.NX Moderator

(Jennryn):[http://kuwait.usembassy.gov/frequently\\_asked\\_questions2.html](http://kuwait.usembassy.gov/frequently_asked_questions2.html)

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): For more passport information, log on to:

<http://kuwait.usembassy.gov/passports.html>.

Abdellatif Sharaa: Hello and good day! My son was born here in Kuwait August 15, 1990 and the embassy could not issue a birth certificate of a US citizen abroad due to the Iraq occupation circumstances. I approached the US embassy in Jordan shortly before he turned 18 and they asked for proof that I lived five continuous years in the US. It was not easy for me to go to Jordan on time, so what can I do to straighten things out! The young man plans to go to the US for his masters and continue there? Appreciate your help.

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Hi, thanks for your question. In order to transmit U.S. citizenship to a child born to one citizen and one non-citizen of the U.S., the U.S. citizen parent must have been physically present in the United States for five years prior to the birth of the child. Two of those years must have been after the age of fourteen. This is what the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan was referring to. If your son resides in Kuwait

and would like to apply for a passport at our office, he is most welcome to visit our website and make an appointment. The transmission requirement remains in effect.

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): Welcome Sidney! Feel free to submit questions to the Consul General

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): For a Youtube video of Embassy Kuwait's visa procedures, please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPKDHAullos>

Rola: Hi.. I had a similar question to "kuwait"'s question but my situation is reversed.. I am an American citizen and looking to get the US permanent residency for my husband. I was looking to start the process in the US embassy in Kuwait and get him the immigrant visa but was told that I had to be a Kuwaiti resident for at least six months in order to use that service.. While I have just been here for three months as a visitor and now in the process of acquiring the Kuwaiti residency.

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Hi, Rola thanks for the question. Yes, you are correct, in order to file an immigrant visa petition at the Embassy in Kuwait City, you need to be a resident of the country for six months. If you are establishing residency here, it sounds like you will be able to do this early in the New Year. It's important to keep in mind that a green card is for people who live and work in the United States. If you and your husband plan to continue to reside abroad and to visit the U.S. only for short periods, perhaps another visa category would be more appropriate in your case.

Rola: So should start the process in the US or have to wait for six months?

General Consul: Patrick Walsh: Hi, Rola, the answer depends on your circumstances. People who live in the U.S. can file visa petitions with the office of the Department of Homeland Security closest to their place of residence in the United States. The DHS office approves the petition, and eventually it goes to the Embassy where the applicant will apply for the immigrant visa. So, you have the option of filing a petition in the US with office of the DHS nearest your place of residence.

Rola: thanks for your response. We are planning to move to the states in another year or two; should we wait until we are close in time before working on the papers? How long would it take to get the immigration visa? I heard it might take up to 8 months. And are we obliged to immediately move to the states once the immigration visa is issued? Is there a time restriction or we can use when needed?

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Hi, Rola, the time necessary to get an immigrant visa, to a large extent, depends on the applicant. For example, there are certain documents you have to obtain, such as police certificates and financial documents, which sometimes can take a long time to obtain and can slow the process down. An immigrant visa, once issued, is valid for six months, so you can use it within that six-month window. As part of the immigrant visa interview, we would verify that you are either residing in the United States or are proceeding to the United States to take up residence.

Rola: Thanks Mr. Walsh for your response. I actually live here now with my husband but will be visiting the US for the holidays. Can I still file for the visa in the US? Or have to work through the embassy since I live here now?

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Hi, Rola, if you plan to visit the US for a short period, like a vacation, your husband may want to apply for a temporary visitor visa. Your husband can do this himself. He simply needs to go to our website, read the instructions and make an appointment.

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): Welcome Frank! Feel free to ask the General Consul questions!

General Consul Patrick Walsh: HI, Dana, HI, Frank. Welcome to the webchat!

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Welcome, Mr. Lewis. Did you have a question for us?

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): We are glad you all could join us today, and we thank you for patiently waiting for your questions to be answered. I want to remind everyone that this webchat ends in 20 minutes.

sidney lewis: My name is Sid, and I'm a US citizen, my wife is from Ethiopia, she now has her green card & SS#. We are planning on staying in Kuwait until Dec. 2011. My ? is, how long can she stay gone from the US per year & how long must her visit be in the states?

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Hi, Sid, thanks for your question. This is a question that a lot of people ask about. In general, if you have a green card, that means you are a U.S. resident, i.e., living and working in the U.S. If you're not, the Department of Homeland Security may decide you are no longer a resident and lift the card. Our experience is that DHS will not do so if a green card holder does not remain outside the US for longer than one year. However, we need to understand that this is not a hard and fast rule -- DHS has wide discretion in this matter. It is possible to obtain a white, passport-like reentry permit from DHS, but you have to apply for them inside the US. Hope this info helps.

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): If you have more questions to ask, please feel free to submit them

Frank Madrigal: I just wanted to chime in and thank you so very much for allowing for the availability of this very important chat and Thank you Consular Section Chief Mr. Patrick Walsh!

General Consul Patrick Walsh: No, problem, glad you could join us, Frank.

Rola: Mr. Walsh, sorry but I have one last question, my husband has a five year visitor visa, once we decide to move to the states, can we both travel to the USA then apply for the petition from there? or does he have to be outside of the US when I file the petition for him?

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Oh, no, Rola, please don't try that. A visitor visa is just that -- a visa for people who are going to the US for a vacation and who intend to return to a residence abroad. If you attempt to enter the US on a visitor visa with the attempt to remain permanently, you're running the risk that your husband's visa will be cancelled and that he will be sent back to Kuwait. He could even be made ineligible for another visa on a permanent basis. Please don't try this.

Frank Madrigal: I am the Regional Security Manager for DynCorp Intl in Kuwait. As you may already be aware, we have many Americans working in support of LOGCAPIV and my compound question is of when the next chat will be available and if it is desired we inform. I was sent this information and link from our OSAC Team.

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Hi, Frank, our thought was to have the next webchat in mid-January. We will try to announce the date as early as possible.

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Hi, Dana, do you have a question?

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Thanks, Frank. See you at the next webchat.

Frank Madrigal: Sounds Great! Will look forward to the information. All, Please have a wonderful, joyful and safe Holiday Season!!! Good bye.

Jennifer: Hello! I am Jennifer and I reside in Kuwait. My question to the General Consul is to what extent does the consulate get involved to help an American Citizen who gets in trouble with the law here? Thanks

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Hi, Jennifer, thank you for your question. If an American Citizen experiences legal problems, it is important to get the best possible legal representation as quickly as possible. If you are having trouble finding a suitable attorney, we can provide a list of attorneys who may be able to help you. Please visit our website for further details.

guest: hi I am wondering about the visa interview. What questions are asked?

General Consul Patrick Walsh: This is a great question. In general, at a nonimmigrant visa interview, the consul is looking for information about your economic and social position in Kuwait. He needs to determine that you have a life situation in Kuwait which is good enough to make you come back after a short visit to the United States. Ask yourself the question: What is it that I have to come back to in Kuwait. The answer will be what you talk about at your interview.

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Dana, are you still there? Do you have a question? Five minutes to go.

Rola: before you close, I just wanted to thank you and wish you Happy Holidays. Best, Rola

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Thank you, Rola. Have a great holiday!

guest: also, how long in advance can I apply for a visa? I will not leave Kuwait for another year. Is it too soon?

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Good question. We advise people to apply as far in advance as possible. Visas are usually valid for more than one year (depending on what kind of passport you have) -- so we encourage you to plan ahead.

guest: thank you Mr. Walsh

sidney lewis: sid again, How can I change my wife last name, to match my last name?

General Consul Patrick Walsh: Hi, Sid, did you mean change her name in her passport? Is it a US passport?

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): Everyone, after this last question, the webchat will be closed. The time is now 4:00pm AST/8:00am EST

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): If you are still interested in chatting, free to log into CO.NX's live webchat covering the World Summit on Climate Change.

<https://statedept.connectsolutions.com/uscenter> or

<https://statedept.connectsolutions.com/wednesday>

sidney lewis: I want to her last name in every way.

General Consul Patrick Walsh: OK, Sid, thanks for the question. To change names on identity documents, you normally have to go to the issuer of that document. For example, to change a name on a passport, you would have to go to the Embassy that issued that passport. In the case of a US passport, the person would have to get a new passport issued. To get documents like driver's licenses or residency visas altered, you need to go to the appropriate offices. Perhaps your employer can help with this. It can be a big job.

CO.NX Moderator (Jennryn): Thanks for coming to this webchat everyone. The webchat is now closed, but a transcript of it will be posted on this page within about 3 days. Best wishes to everyone.

General Consul Patrick Walsh: thank you everybody for participating and we look forward to answering your questions in the next webchat.